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S E R M O N
P R E A C H ' D at the
C O N S E C R A T I O N
O F T H E
B I S H O P of *BANGOR*.

SEERMON

CONSECRATION
OF THE

BISHOP

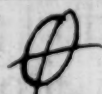


A
S E R M O N
P R E A C H ' D in
C R O T D O N C H A P E L,
On SUNDAY *August 11th*, 1723.
AT THE
C O N S E C R A T I O N
OF THE

Right Reverend Father in GOD,
W I L L I A M,
Lord Bishop of *B A N G O R*.

By *S A M U E L L I S L E*, D. D.
Rector of *St. Mary le Bow*, and Chaplain to his Grace the
Lord Arch-Bishop of *C A N T E R B U R Y*.

Published by Command of his Grace the Lord Arch-Bishop
of *C A N T E R B U R Y*.

L O N D O N : 

Printed for *BENJ. COWSE* at the *Rose and Crown* in *St. Paul's*
Church-Yard. 1723.

Bp K

A
SERMON

PREACHED IN

CROFTON CHAPEL

ON SUNDAY, AUGUST 11th 1733.

AT THE

CONSECRATION

OF THE

Right Reverend Father in GOD,

WILLIAM

Lord Bishop of BANGOR.

By SAMUEL VASEL, D.D.
Rector of St. Mary le Botolph, and Chaplain to his Grace the
Lord Archbishop of CANTERBURY.



Published by Command of his Grace the Lord Archbishop
of CANTERBURY.

L O N D O N :

Printed for BENT, Cowart at the Key and Crown in St. Pauls
Church-Yard. 1733.



H E B. XIII. 17.

Obey them that have the Rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your Souls, as they that must give Account.



Suppose our Translation of this Text will be sufficiently vindicated, by considering other Places of Scripture, where the same original Words *ἡγούμενοι* and *πειθομεναι* which we render by *Ruling* and *Obeying*, are manifestly taken in this Sense and cannot be understood otherwise. It will be sufficient to produce an Instance or two to this purpose. In that eminent Prophecy concerning the Place of the Messiah's Nativity, recited *Matt. ii. 6.* The *Governour* who was

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to come out of Bethlehem to feed God's People Israel, is expressed by no other Word than *ἡγέμενος*. The same is applied to Joseph, Acts vii. 10. when he was made Governour over the Land of Egypt, and over Pharaoh's House, *κατέστησεν αὐτὸν ἡγέμενον ἐπὶ Αἰγύπτου, καὶ ὅλον τὸ οἶκον αὐτοῦ* *. The other Term, *πέθεσθαι*, which is here translated *Obeys*, is by St. James used in the same Sense Epist. iii. 3. *Ἰδὲ τῶν ἵππων τὰς χαλκίδας εἰς τὰ στόματα βάλλομεν πρὸς τὸ πέθεσθαι αὐτοὺς ἡμῖν*, Behold we put Bits in the Horses Mouths that they may obey us : And being here join'd with *† ὑπέκχετε*, submit yourselves, it is in this Place, at least, evidently restrained to the Sense in which our Translators have taken it. Besides, the very Nature of the Thing requires this Interpretation ; for if *ἡγέμενοι* be well render'd *those who rule over us*, the Duty on our Part can be no other than Obedience and Submission to them. Supposing it certain, therefore, that the Words are rightly render'd of Subjects and Governours, the next Words shew us of what Sort or Nature these Governours, of which the Apostle speaks, are. That they are not temporal Rulers who take care of our worldly Interests and Concerns, but their Government consists in *Watching for our Souls*, and therefore is of a spiritual Nature ; And whereas they are to give Account of their Care and Fidelity in the Discharge of this Office, this shews that they are appointed to it by God himself, to whom they are to give

* Vide etiam nomen eiusdem Inscriptionem apud Montf. Palaeograph. Græc. p. 10.
† Vide eundem in loc.

Account. So that the Words describe to us the Outlines, as it were, of the Christian Church, that it is not a confus'd Multitude without Rule or Order, but is a regular well digested Society, wherein God has appointed some to *Rule* and others to *Obey*. And from hence will follow.

I. That the Church is a visible spiritual Society govern'd by proper Officers and Ministers appointed by God himself. And because the Church is to continue till the Consummation of all things, therefore,

II. These Officers and Ministers are to be preserv'd by Succession throughout all Ages of the Church. And because no Society can well subsist without a regular Subordination of the Officers and Ministers in it, therefore,

III. The Ministers of the Church are of different Orders and Degrees. And because the Members of the Christian Church are here commanded to *obey and submit themselves* to the *Rulers* of it; It will not be improper,

Lastly, To enquire what the Powers are with which they are invested.

I. That the Church, &c. That the Church is a Society is an evident Consequence of there being *Rulers*

lers appointed of it, and of some being commanded to *obey* these Rulers, since where Men live at large, independent of one another, and loose from all those Bonds which being in Societies layes upon them, the very Nature of the thing shews, that there is not nor can be any Government or Subjection at all; as on the contrary, as soon as Governours and Subjects are constituted, Anarchy ceases, a Dependence of some upon others is introduc'd, and a dutiful Obedience and Submission according to the Nature of the Government. So that where ever Governours and Subjects are, there must necessarily be supposed a Society and all things essential to it; and where the former are mention'd the latter must be imply'd, since they can't subsist separately. It is true, indeed, that the Union of all Christians under our blessed Lord, who is the common Head and King and Governour of his universal Church and Kingdom, and their Participation of the same Privileges, the Forgiveness of their Sins, and the Communion of the Holy Spirit, do certainly demonstrate the Christian Church to be a Society, but then it does not hence so evidently appear that this Society is, or ought to be, visible, because the Bond of this Union with our Head, and the Graces we derive from him, our Faith, our acceptance with him, and the Operations of his Spirit upon our Souls, are all internal and invisible. But the consideration of the external Polity, established in this Society, does clearly prove the Society it self to be external, since a Society of visible Men, *obeying*

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and submitting themselves to visible Rulers, must needs be a visible Society. Besides, the Admission into this Society by Baptism, the external Communion of the Members of this Society in Prayer, and the Participation of the Lord's Supper, which are enjoined and commanded by our Lord and his Apostles, do all prove this Society to be visible: For if the Communion in these outward Rites be the Notes and Tokens of the Members of this Society, whereby they are united to each other, and distinguish'd from all other Men; if publickly meeting together, for praying to, and praising God, be the Duty of all who are incorporated into this Body, undoubtedly the Body or Society it self must be external or visible. And tho' it may and dos, too often, happen that many are admitted into this visible Society who are not, indeed, united with it's Head, *i. e.* who have not Faith in Christ, who are not good here, nor will be happy hereafter: Yet no one who is not join'd to this Society has any right to the Privileges of it, nor can lay any Claim to the Promises made to it. For all the Promises of Christ are made to his Church, and if there are many who do not attain to, or enjoy these Promises, the Fault is entirely in themselves who do not perform the Conditions annext to them. And hence it appears that every one is oblig'd to enter into and continue in this Society, oblig'd, I mean, as far as the Hopes of Happiness, and the Fear of everlasting Misery can oblige Men: So that if

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the Christian Church be a voluntary Club, or Society, as some love to speak, tis so only in this Sense, that it is left to every one's Choice whether he will go to Heaven or not. * *He that believes and is baptiz'd, that is, is admitted into the Society of Christ's Church, shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damn'd.*

But tho' the Church of Christ be thus an external visible Society, yet it is founded upon different Maxims, and directed to quite different Ends and Purposes from worldly and temporal Societies; the End of these is the Maintaining outward Peace, and protecting the Lives and Possessions of Men, the Design of the other is the promoting Piety and Virtue in this Life, and the introducing Men into immortal Happiness in the next; consequently the Governours of the one have to do with mens Bodies and Estates, the *Rulers* of the other are here, by the Apostle, said to *watch* for mens *Souls*: The Preservation of mens spiritual Interests is the Trust repos'd in them, this is the End of Instituting the Society it self, and hither the *Rulers* of it are to direct all their Solitude and Care. And for this purpose they were appointed by Christ himself, as the Apostle proceeds to shew, *for, says he, they watch for your Souls, as they that must give Account.* And if they are to *give Account* to Christ of their Fidelity and Dili-

* Mark xvi. 16.

gence in this Office, 'tis a good Argument that the Office it self was committed to them by Christ. To the same purpose St. Paul elsewhere observes, That it was *requir'd* of them to be * *faithful* as being *Ministers of Christ and Stewards of the Mysteries of God*. And if the Apostles and Rulers in Christ's Church are *Ministers and Stewards of God and Christ*, if they are *required to be faithful* in this Ministry and Stewardship, if they *watch for Mens Souls and must give Account*, 'tis plain they are appointed to all this by Christ himself. And our Apostle dos in other Places expressly affirm of himself, That our Lord, † counting him *faithful*, put him into the *Ministry*, and that the ‡ *Dispensation of the Gospel is committed to him* by Christ, and of the whole Body of Officers and Ministers in the Church, That (*) *Christ has set some in the Church, first Apostles, secondarily Teachers, &c.* and that the (†) *Holy Ghost had made the Elders Overseers to feed the Flock of Christ*. But because it may be said, That tho' the Apostles and first Rulers of Christ's Church were, indeed, appointed by Christ himself and the Administration of the Affairs of this Spiritual Society was committed to them ; yet to apply it to the present State of the Church it will be necessary to prove, that this Office and Ministry was derived to others af-

* 1 Cor. iv. 1.
ii. 28.

† 1 Tim. i. 12.
(†) Acts xx. 28,

‡ 1 Cor. ix. 17.

(*) 1 Cor.

ter their decease, and ought always to continue in the Church. I proceed,

II. To shew, That as the Church is to continue 'till the Consummation of all Things ; so these Rulers and Ministers are to be preserv'd by Succession throughout all Ages of it. And here it may be observ'd in Favour of the Perpetuity of the Ministers and Officers of Christ's Church, that whereas it has been already shewn, that they are *Christ's Ministers and Stewards*, are appointed by him, and must *give account* of their *Fidelity* in this Ministry, it is not so much as pretended that there is any Intimation given in the Scripture, that their Functions and Offices are ever to cease and be extinct in the Church; whence one may gather a strong Presumption, at least, that being once established they are ever to continue as long as the Church, and the End of their Institution dos. For if these Offices being once establish'd should afterwards cease, or be extinguish'd, the Failure of them must be accounted for one of these Ways; either from the Nature of the Church, which will not admit them to continue perpetually: Or of the Offices themselves which will naturally cease and expire: Or from some Declaration of Christ, that these Offices shall continue for but a certain Time. Or, lastly, Let it be shewn, that in Fact these Offices have ceas'd, and that there is not the same Reason for their continuance in the Church now as there

there was formerly. But the Extinction of Rulers and Officers in Christ's Church is so far from appearing either of these Ways, that I shall chuse to prove by every one of them, that they were intended and ought to be perpetual in it. And,

First, From the Nature of Christ's Church : As it was above shewn, That the Church is a Society because the Apostle dos in the Text mention the *Rulers* of it, and directs *Obedience* to be paid to them ; so from it's being prov'd to be a Society will reciprocally appear the Necessity of its having *Rulers* and Ministers, since it is imposible any Society shou'd subsist without them : Either, therefore, the Church must from the Apostle's Time, have ceas'd to be a Society, or else, from that Time Rulers and Ministers must have continued in it : But if there be no Reason proving the Church to be a Society in the Apostle's Days, which dos not equally prove it a Society at any other Period, 'tis plain that all the Consequences drawn from its being a Society formerly are equally cogent now ; and therefore, if the Church were a Society at its first Institution, and if the Consequence of that be the Establishing of *Rulers* in it, 'tis evident that the same Consequence will hold as long as it shall continue a Society, that is, as long as the Church it self shall continue ; and therefore, that Rulers and Ministers must be preserv'd in it throughout all the Ages of it. Nor,

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Secondly,

Secondly, Is there any Thing in the Nature of the Offices themselves to cause them to cease. It is true, That the Apostles and first Preachers of the Gospel were endued with the Power of working Miracles, and speaking divers Kinds of Tongues, which were extraordinary Gifts, and not intended to continue always. But surely the Office of an Apostle did not consist in working Miracles, but in preaching the Gospel; the Power of doing wonderful Works was given them only to enable them to preach the Gospel; with greater Authority and Success; * *And Tongues were a Sign not to them who believe, but to them who believe not*: As soon, therefore, as by these Means the Gospel had prevail'd over as great Part of the World, as to the divine Wisdom seem'd fit, these extraordinary Gifts ceas'd: But did the Apostle's Office and Ministry likewise immediately cease about all Persons who being convinc'd by their Miracles embrac'd the Gospel? As, if their Office consisted only in performing extraordinary Things, it must have done; since it is plainly to no Purpose to work Miracles for the Conviction of Persons who are already convinc'd. But in their Writings, and in the History of their Acts, we find them still employ'd about the Faithful who had no further need of Miracles, in Preaching, in Praying, in breaking

* 1 Cor. xiv. 22.

of Bread, in iffuing out Decrees for the Direction of the Church, in laying on of Hands, in compofing Diffentions, and cenfuring Offenders : Thefe are the great Branches of the Apoftolical Office, properly fo call'd, to which the working of Miracles was but auxiliary, ferving only to introduce the Exercife of thefe more useful Functions. As long, therefore, as Preaching, as Praying, as Adminiftring the Sacraments, as Peace and Order, and Discipline fhall be neceffary in the Church, fo long will it be neceffary that the Officers to whom the Performance of thefe Functions is committed, fhall remain and be continued.

Thirdly, Our Lord has declar'd and promis'd, that thefe Officers fhall continue for ever in the Church. It has generally been underftood, that the Promise our Lord made to the Apoftles, when he fent them forth to * *teach and baptize all Nations, Loe I am with you always even unto the End of the World*, did imply the Continuance of the Minifters and Governours of Chrift's Church till the Confummation of all Things ; for fince this Promise cou'd not be confin'd perfonally to the Apoftles who all dy'd not many Years after our Lord's Afcention, it has reasonably been interpreted to extend to all their Succelfors in the Chriftian Church : And the Way taken to evade this has

* Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

been by interpreting *ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος*, to mean either the End of the *Jewish* State, or Dispensation, that is, 'till the Destruction of the City and Temple of *Jerusalem*, or else 'till the End of the Age or Lives of the Apostles themselves. But against the first of these Evasions it may be observ'd, That St. *John* did actually outlive the Destruction of the Temple and wrote his * *Revelation*, and govern'd the Churches of *Asia* some Years after it, to whom it will not be pretended, I suppose, that the *Presence of Christ* was ever wanting. Against the other Evasion it may be observed, That *Ἀἰών* is not the Gospel term for a Man's Life which is always express'd by *γενεα*: and besides, if any Credit may be given to Ecclesiastical Antiquity, it is certain that the Power of working Miracles, which is a certain Sign of Christ's *Presence*, continued in the Church many Years after all the Apostles were fallen a sleep; and if Christ were present in so extraordinary a Manner, we cannot suppose he shou'd be absent in more ordinary Instances.

Lastly, It is Fact, that Ministers and Rulers have continued in the Church from the very Beginning to this Day, and no imaginable Reason can be assign'd why Ministers and Governours shou'd be necessary in the first Ages of the Church which will

* *Vid. Euseb. E. H. L. 3 C. 18. & 23.*

not equally hold thro' every other Age even 'till the End of the World. 'Tis certain from St. *Paul's* own writings that he himself ordained *Timothy* and *Titus*, directing them to * *ordain likewise Elders in every City* : And many of the Ecclesiastical Writers have left us † Catalogues of the Bishops who had from Time to Time succeeded in several Cities, even from the Times of the Apostles themselves, which is a Thing too well known to need being insisted on. And if the Apostles themselves thought it necessary to appoint their Successors, commanding them likewise to appoint others ; I believe it will be impossible to assign a Time and Reason, when and why this Necessity shou'd cease : But the same Reason which induc'd the Apostle to ordain *Titus*, for instance, commanding him to *ordain others*, will ever induce a Necessity of continuing on the Succession as long as the Christian Church shall last. For if the Needs and Necessities of the Church, to which these Offices are apply'd, continue in all Ages the same, what imaginable Reason can be given why the Offices themselves shou'd not continue ? I proceed now,

III. To shew, That as no Society of any considerable extent can well subsist without a regular Subordination among the Officers and Ministers of it ; so

* *Tit. i. 5.* † *Tim. iii. 2.* † *Vid. Euseb. lib. 4. cap. 5. & Iren. lib. 3. cap. 3.*
 & *Tertull. lib. de Præscrip. adv. Hær. cap. 32.*

the Ministers of Christ's Church are of different Orders and Degrees. And this diversity of Degrees is so necessary from the very Nature of large Societies, and from the different Offices and Functions to be administer'd in them, that even they themselves, who have thought fit to destroy the regular Subordination of inferior Ministers to superior, which the Apostles left in the Church, have found it necessary to establish a new Sort of Superiors of their own Invention. And, when they wou'd no longer be subject to the Apostolical Order of Bishops, have set up a Sort of Classes, and Synods, and Elders, utterly unknown to all Antiquity. But it is not my Business at present to dispute this Matter with these Men. I shall therefore proceed to shew in Fact, That by the Constitution of our Lord and his Apostles, the Church has from the Beginning been governed by Ministers of different Degrees. We find then in the Gospels that our Lord did at several Times chuse out of the whole Body of his Followers, first, the Twelve Apostles, and afterwards * Seventy other Disciples, whom he sent forth to preach; and because the Commission given to both of them runs chiefly in the same Words; hence some have been induc'd to believe that they were both of the same Order, and upon a perfect Equality; but that there was a great Disparity between

* *Luke* x. 1.

them, and that the Apostles were really, and were always understood to be, of an Order superior to the seventy Disciples, will appear from this single Consideration, that when, upon the Defection and Death of the Traytor *Judas*, a Vacancy happened in the College of the Apostles, *Matthias* was with great Solemnity, and by the Interposition of God himself, appointed to fill it, and was thence * *number'd among the Apostles* ; yet this very Person was before (if any Credit may be given to the antient † Ecclesiastical Writers) one of the seventy Disciples: If, therefore, the seventy were of the same Order with the Apostles, to what was it that *Matthias* was appointed ? Why all this Solemnity and Prayers to God only to declare a Man to be what he was indeed before ? I think, therefore, we may conclude, that there was a Difference in the Order or Degree of those Preachers of the Gospel which were ordain'd even by Christ himself. If we proceed to a View of what the Apostles did afterwards, in ordaining Ministers of the Church, we shall find a Difference of Degree among them no less certain. I suppose it will not be necessary, nor expected that I shou'd go over the whole History of their Acts, or take Notice of all the Passages in their Epistles, from whence this may be prov'd. I will therefore make choice of an Example or two which do clearly shew it. 'Tis

* *Acts* i. 26.† *Euseb. E. H. lib. 1. cap. 12.*

evident, therefore, and agreed on all Hands, that the Deacons were of an Order very much inferior to the Apostles ; and although the Occasion of their Ordination were to take care of the Poor, yet they were not so confin'd to this Employment, but we find two of them, * *Stephen* and *Philip*, immediately preaching the Word, and the latter baptizing. We find likewise † *Paul* and *Barnabas* ordaining Elders, who were without Controversy inferior to the Apostles, in the Cities where they preach'd the Gospel. And St. *Paul* having ordain'd *Timothy* and *Titus*, and fix'd the Residence of the one at *Ephesus*, and of the other in *Crete* ; in the Epistles which he afterwards writ to them, giving them Directions how they shou'd govern the Churches over which he had appointed them, commanding them to ordain (*) Elders and Deacons, to inspect their Lives and Manners, and take care of their Maintenance ; and if the Power of ordaining, of correcting and censuring, gives a Man any Authority over, or makes him of a different Order from others, whom he thus ordains and Censures, then undoubtedly *Timothy* and *Titus* were of an Order superior to the Elders and Deacons, and the chief Care and Presidence in the Church was committed to them, by whom the inferior Orders of Clergy as well as the Laity were to be directed and governed. Nor are the

Acts vi. 7, 8.

† *Acts* xiv. 23.

(*) *Tit.* i. 5.

the only Instances to be found in Scripture of single Persons vested with chief Authority in the Church. For the * seven Epistles, which in the Revelation our Lord is introduc'd as dictating to the seven most eminent Churches of the Proconsular *Asia*, are directed severally to the *Angels* of these Churches, Persons who must certainly have had the chief Care and Authority over them, because they are blamed or commended for every thing our Lord finds fault with, or praises among them, which cou'd not well have been done unless their good or ill Example, their Authority and Instruction, their Care or Negligence, had been the Cause of one or the other. And though some, who seeing that a single Person having supreme or chief Authority in the Church is certainly a Bishop, wou'd therefore willingly apply the Title of *Angel* either to the whole Church or to a College of Presbyters presiding over it; yet to understand it of more than a single Person is to do Violence to the whole Tenour of the Epistles, which run constantly in the singular Number, and to apply them to more Persons than one wou'd make them inconsistent. Besides, it may be prov'd from † Ecclesiastical History, that there were Bishops presiding in all these Churches, so exceeding near the Time of writing the *Revelation*, both

* Rev. ii.

† Vid. Ignat. Ep. ad Ephes. de Onesimo eorum Episc. & ad Smyrneos & ad Polycar. vid. etiam Euseb. H. E. lib. 5. cap. 24.

before and after it, that it wou'd be wonderful if there shou'd have been none at the very Time of writing it. And thus it appears from Scripture, that in the first Age there were distinct Orders of Ministers in the Church, that there was a Subordination among them, that the Presidency or chief Authority was in the several Churches committed to single Persons, that there were at least three Orders when St. *Paul* writ his Epistles, first of Apostles (in which I suppose *Timothy* and *Titus* included) next of Elders, and lastly of Deacons inferior to both : Which are the same Degrees that have ever since continued in the Church under the Titles of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. And, I suppose, these Facts, as they appear in the *New Testament*, are sufficient to prove the real Distinction between the two superior Orders (for of the lowest there has never been any Question) and the Subordination of the one to the other, even if we shou'd not be able to give a clear Account of the Difficulties which have been rais'd about the Words Ἐπίσκοπος and Πρεσβυτερος being synonymous Terms for Persons of the same Order: For granting that these two are only different Names of the same Order (as indeed seems very probable) yet here are plainly three distinct Orders named, one of which particularly is superior to Presbyters, if ordaining them, if governing and censuring them can make them so. But as to the Difficulty it self, concerning the promiscuous Use

Use of the Terms *Bishops and Presbyters*. I shall chuse to account for it in the Words of the learned * *Theodorit*, *The same Persons*, says he, *were anti-ently call'd Bishops and Presbyters, and they whom we now call Bishops were then call'd Apostles, but in process of Time the Name of Apostles was appropriated to them who were Apostles in the strict Sense, and the rest who had formerly the Name of Apostles were styl'd Bishops.* In this Sense Epaphroditus is called the *Apostle of the Philip-pians*, Titus was the *Apostle of the Cretans*, and Timothy of Asia. Every one of which Persons, however, are by other Authors expressly nam'd Bishops, and all Bishops are said to be Successors of the Apostles and of the Apostolical Order. If from the Scripture we descend to the Ecclesiastical Writers, the Government of the Church by Bishops and the Subordination of Presbyters and Deacons to them, is so clearly and so copiously attested that their Works are almost full of it. † *St. Ignatius*, who was an Apostolical Man and almost an Apostle, does so largely, so zealously, and with so much Concern insist upon the Authority of the Episcopal Order, that 'tis plain he considered it not only as the Institution of Christ himself, but was persuaded that the very Being of the Church depended upon it. And, indeed, the Opinion of the divine Institution of Episcopacy, as superior to Presbyters, is deliver'd down from the ear-

* *Com. in 1 Tim. iii. 1.*

† *Vide Ep. ad Smyrnæos.*

lyest Antiquity in so strong and so uninterrupted Current, that in fourteen hundred Years and more there was found but one Man (*Aerius* the *Arian Heretic*) who openly contradicted it, and only *St. Jerom* who is suppos'd to speak suspiciously about it, and yet of * *St. Jerom* it may be observ'd, that he has adopted that common Observation, that as the *Jewish* State was typical of the Christian Dispensation, so the Ecclesiastical Orders of the former represented those of the Christian Church, *And*, says he, *what Aaron and his Sons and the Levites were in the Temple, that Bishops, Priests, and Deacons are in the Church of Christ*. Which is so clear a Testimony of the divine Institution of the Episcopal Order, that I wonder those who are so fond of his Authority should not see that what in other Places, he says in exaltation of the Order of Presbyters, was not with Intention to derogate from the Authority of Bishops, but only to repress the Arrogance of some Deacons, who, being of the lowest Order in Christ's Church, did yet take upon them to equal themselves with the Dignity of Priests. And this I take to be the true Key for interpreting all those Passages in that learned Father, which those who are prejudic'd against the Order of Bishops lay hold

* *Ut Sciamus Traditiones Apost. sumptas de veteri Testamento quod Aaron & Filij ejus atque Levitæ in Templo fuerint, hoc sibi Episcopi & Presbyteri, & Diaconi, vindicent Ecclesia. vide Epist. ad Evagrium.*

of, as favouring their Opinion. Having thus shewn the divine Institution of the Ministry, it's perpetual Establishment, and the several Orders and Degrees among the Officers of Christ's Church, because the *Hebrews* are here in the Text commanded *to obey and submit themselves* to these *Rulers*. I come now,

Lastly, To shew what are the Powers they are invested with. I have before observed, that the Church of Christ is a spiritual Society, and the *Rulers* of it spiritual *Rulers*, consequently the Powers they are invested with must be spiritual Powers: As *they watch for Mens Souls*, so the Care of them is the End of their Institution and the Measure of their Power; so that if the Rulers of Christ's Church happen to be trusted with any Branches of Civil Authority, that Power they do not derive from the Gospel, but is owing to the Constitution of the Country in which they live. But as *they watch for Mens Souls*, that is, as they are entrusted with bringing Men to everlasting Happiness by the Practice of Evangelical Piety and Righteousness; so whatever Means the Gospel proposes as necessary to the Attaining this End; the Promoting those Means, and the Execution of all Functions relating to them, is the proper Office and Employment of the Rulers and Ministers of Christ's Church.

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Church. And therefore, as Faith in Jesus Christ, and the Practice of universal Holiness and Righteousness (which are the Terms of the Evangelical Covenant), as prayer to God, and partaking in the Holy Sacraments, are all prescribed in the Gospel as necessary to the Attaining everlasting Happiness ; so declaring and expounding the Gospel of our Lord, presiding in the publick Worship of God , and administering the Sacraments of the New Covenant, do properly, and according to the Nature of this spiritual Society, belong to the Rulers and Ministers of it : For to whom else shou'd they belong ? The Actions now mentioned are Acts proper to this Society, and if they are not executed by the Officers and Ministers of it, they can be executed by no Body, and these Offices wou'd be instituted to no purpose at all. I desire, however, it may be observ'd, that we say these Officers are Ministers of the Society, and, therefore, all Affairs which belong to the Society as such must be executed by them : As for private personal Matters, they are of a different Consideration. Hence therefore, as the Admission of Persons into this Society by Baptism, and the Excluding them from it by Ecclesiastical Censures, and the Communion of the whole Body together in the Lord's Supper, are public Acts belonging to the Society as such ; so the Administring of the Sacraments, whereby
this

this Admission and Communion is perform'd, and
 the censuring Offenders, do naturally and regular-
 ly appertain to the public Ministers ; and when
 the whole Society are publicly met together to
 worship God and expound the Holy Scriptures,
 the Performance of this does naturally devolve
 upon the same Persons : But as it is every
 Man's private Duty to pay continual Worship
 to God Almighty, and to inform himself in his
 Will, as well as he is able ; we do not go a-
 bout to abridge any Man of his private Liber-
 ty in these Cases, or discourage him from mak-
 ing use of it, because we affirm that the public
 Expounding the Scripture, and praying to God
 in Christian Assemblies, in a Word, every Thing
 which relates to the Society as such, is the pro-
 per Business of the Officers of this Society. E-
 very one may frequently and devoutly pray to
 God in private, may study the Holy Scriptures
 for his own Instruction, may privately expound
 them for the Edification of his Brethren as much
 as the most extended Charity requires, notwith-
 standing the public Ministration in Christian Af-
 semblies is reserv'd to a particular Order of Men
 who are consecrated and set apart for this ve-
 ry Office. This may suffice concerning the Mi-
 nisters of Christ's Church in general, that they
 are public Persons authoriz'd to transact in the
 Name of God by expounding and declaring his
 Will

Will to the Church, and in the Name of the Church in offering up their Prayers and Devotions to God, and in doing all such other public Acts as belong to the Church as a Society ; all which, I think, very clear from this one Consideration, that they are appointed by God the public Ministers of the Christian Society. But as there are divers Degrees in the Ministry, and divers Ecclesiastical Acts, some of which are appropriated to one Degree and some to another and some common to all ; It might not be improper to consider this Matter distinctly, and to assign to each Order those proper Offices which Scripture and primitive Antiquity have allotted it ; but as the Time and Bounds of this Discourse will not permit it, so because there are none who acknowledge any divine Institution of the Ministry at all, but do likewise allow, that all these Acts, I have above mentioned, do belong to it ; but some confounding the two superior Orders together, and attributing to the second Order all those Acts which we together with Antiquity appropriate to the highest Order of all ; it shall suffice to assert one Power as inherent in Bishops alone, which, if it be well proved will render it less necessary to insist on any other ; such is the Power of Ordination, or setting Persons apart for the Office of the Ministry which ever has been reserved to the Episcopal Order.

der. St. *Paul* ordain'd *Timothy* and *Titus*, and gave them Power of ordaining Elders, but we do not find that these Elders were ever impowered to ordain others, and therefore the Power of Ordination has ever remain'd with those who were call'd to the Succession of the Apostles, as *Timothy* and *Titus* were. Indeed St. *Paul* mentioning *Timothy's* Ordination, does, in one Place, say it was done * *by the laying on the Hands of the Presbytery*, which has serv'd as a Pretence in these later Ages, for calling meer Presbyters to the Exercise of this Office : But as nothing hinders why we may not, with St. † *Chrysostom*, understand by the *Presbytery* a Synod of Bishops, since, as has been before observed, Ἐπίσκοπος & Πρεσβύτερος, seem in this Epistle to be synonymous Terms for Persons of the same Order ; so St. *Paul* does, in another Place, say it was performed ‡ *by his own Hands* ; whence it is clear that what Part soever meer Presbyters may be supposed to bear in this Action, yet the whole Authority was conferr'd by the Apostle himself ; since it is not likely that St. *Paul* shou'd be obliged to call in the Assistance of Presbyters to ratify his Act : Their Presence, indeed, might testify, and make more solemn, the Ordination,

* 1 Tim. iv. 14.

† Οὐ περὶ πρεσβυτέρων φησὶν ἐνταῦθα, ἀλλὰ περὶ ἐπισκόπων, ὃ ᾧ δὲ πρεσβύτεροι ἢ ἐπίσκοπον ἐχουσίν τινες. Hom. 13. in primam ad Tim.

‡ 2 Tim. i. 6.

H

which

which is all the Influence it can be imagin'd to have. And this Power of conferring Orders has ever been so religiously reserved to Bishops, that if in an Instance or two, in all Antiquity it appears, that * a Presbyter took upon him to ordain, it does at the same Time appear that the Attempt was received with amazement as a monstrous unheard of Thing, and the pretended Orders conferred by him were rejected by the Christian Church. And though an † *African* Synod did permit Presbyters to lay on Hands, yet it was only together with the Bishop from whom all the Power was understood to be deriv'd, the Presbyters being admitted for the same Reason above assign'd, namely, for the greater Solemnity of the Action; for that they convey'd no Power is evident hence, that all Ordinations before the Canon of this Synod of *Carthage* had been performed without the Hands of the Presbyters, which Ordinations, however, cannot be imagined to have been defective. And it deserves likewise to be observ'd, that this Liberty was never granted to Presbyters in the *Greek* Church, which, to this Day, confers her Orders by the Hands of her Bishops alone. And if the Power of Ordination be confin'd to the Episcopal Or-

* *Vide de Ickyrâ ordinato a Collutbo Presbytero Athan. Apol. 2. Carth. 4. Can. 3.*

† *Concil.*

der, thence it will follow, that what Powers
soever are conferred on the other Orders, they are
all deriv'd from the Imposition of the Hands of the
Bishops who are God's immediate Ministers for the
Government of his Church, and in whom all Ec-
clesiastical Powers are radically and originally
vested.

But to avoid all Mistakes of this Doctrine,
lay'd down thus in general, it may not be im-
proper to observe, that what I have hitherto
said concerning the Episcopal Order, and the
Powers vested in it, regards the *regular Method*
in which the Ministry was established by the A-
postles, and receiv'd by the Christian Church,
and shews what ought to be of *right* in the
common and ordinary Course of Things; but ex-
traordinary Cases, unavoidable Accidents and Ne-
cessities are, in my judgement, of a different Con-
sideration. And, therefore, if any Bodies of the
Christian Church have been forc'd, by the Ne-
cessity of their Circumstances, to depart from
this Rule, the Necessity under which they lay
must plead their Excuse, nor can they be just-
ly blamed for the Want of that which, indeed,
it is not in their Power to have. For a great
Distinction is to be made between such Rules and
Forms as regard only Order, and the eternal
Laws of Right; these are not to be varied from
in any Circumstances whatsoever, those ever have
been,

been, and ever must be, governed by such Necessities as it pleases God to bring Men under. Were any one to give Account of the Person and Office of the High Priest among the *Jews*, no question, he wou'd describe him (as the Law of God does) as the eldest in the right Line from *Aaron*, and who alone was empowered to make Expiation for the whole People on the great Day of Atonement. And yet, when the *Jews* fell afterwards under a foreign Dominion, and this great Office was expos'd to Sale to the highest Bidder, it wou'd be hard to say, that all this while there was no Atonement made, and that the Persons thus intruding were not High Priests, for we see that our Lord and his Apostles acknowledged and submitted to them as such. And, I think, that in Equity a very great Difference is to be made between open Contempt of a positive Institution, and a plain unavoidable Necessity; in consideration of which one may conclude, that God did dispense with his own Ordinance. Upon these Grounds, though we are very sensible of the Imperfection those foreign Churches labour under which are not subject to the Government of the Episcopal Order, * yet we dare

* For mine own Part, although I see that certain reformed Churches, the *Scottish* especially, and the *French*, have not that which best agreeth with the sacred Scripture, I mean, the Government that is by Bishops, in as much as both those Churches are fallen under a different

dare not take upon us to pronounce their Ministry and Ordinances void, upon this Account: If their Case be candidly consider'd they will be found to want this primitive Institution, only because their Circumstances will not permit them to have it; we know none of 'em who presumptuously renounce it, many, we are sure, do highly reverence it: And may it please God, in his own good time, to unite us all in external Order and Discipline, as we are already in the Fundamentals of our Faith.

Thus much may suffice concerning the Institution, the Perpetuity, the Degrees and Powers of the Ministry in Christ's Church. From all which has been said on these Heads I shall, in very few Words, make an Inference or two, and so conclude.

And, *First*, If the Ministers of Christ's Church are appointed by Christ himself, no Man ought to assume this Office without being lawfully called and sent to it, and they who do so, not on-

different Kind of Regiment; which to remedy it, is for the one altogether too late, and too soon for the other, during their present Affliction and Trouble: This their Defect and Imperfection I had rather lament in such a Case than exagitate, considering that Men oftentimes without any Fault of their own, may be driven to want that Kind of Polity or Regiment which is best; and to content themselves with that, which either the irremediable Error of former Times, or the Necessity of the present hath cast upon them. Hooker's E. P. Book 3. §. 11.

ly introduce Disorder and Confusion into the Church, but also usurp upon the Authority of our Lord, who has established these Ministers and by whose Designation they act. And if the Subordination of Ministers be a Divine or Apostolical Ordinance, inferior Ministers ought not to usurp upon the Office delegated to the superior, but are to keep themselves within the Bounds prescribed by their Commission, beyond which they have no Authority at all.

Secondly, The *Rulers* of Christ's Church may here see the End of their Institution, and the important Nature of their Office, that *they watch for Mens Souls*, that the Care of their eternal Welfare is committed to them, and therefore they are to direct all their Studies and Actions to this End: But there is no need of insisting on this, on this Occasion, and to this Auditory.

Lastly, Let us who are placed under the Government of these *Rulers*, and Fathers in Christ's Church, always remember how dutifully we ought to reverence and *highly esteem them for their Works Sake*, how we ought to obey their Admonitions, and *submit* to their Corrections, that may see our *profiting in the*
Lord

Lord, and beholding the Travel of their Soul may be satisfy'd, may preside over us with chearfulness and satisfaction in this Life, and when, at the last Day, the great Shepherd himself shall appear, they may give Account of their Ministry and Care over us with Joy and not with Grief. Which God grant, &c.

F I N I S.



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I am sending the Treaty of 1763
to you, and I am sure you will
be interested in it. It is a
very important document, and
it is one which you should
read carefully.



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